

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 4-9 and 22-24 are amended. Claims 29 and 30 are added. No new matter is added. Claim 3 is cancelled. Claims 1, 2, 4-24, 29 and 30 are pending and under consideration.

Claim 1 is amended to recite the subject matter originally put forth in claim 3, which is cancelled. Claims 4-9 are amended to be in agreement with amended claim 1. Claims 22-24 are amended to include features similar to the features added to claim 1. The claim amendments are fully supported by the originally filed specification and claims.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,487,600 to Lynch in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0120783 to Evgey.

Claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Lynch and Evgey. According to claim 1 a distribution content provided by a first user terminal, is first distributed to one or more distributee-candidate terminals selected, in accordance with the distribution condition, and then distributed by the distributee-candidate terminal having received the distribution content, to user terminals that are registered in the buddy list of the distributee-candidate terminals. Further, the distribution stops according to a stop distribution condition. Applicants respectfully submit that Lynch's backoff rules and link formation rules do not anticipate the stop distribution condition of claim 1. Additionally, Lynch's metanetworks do not perform any second transmission of the information shared by the members of the metanetwork, and Egvey's pyramidal distribution does not progress according to buddy lists or stops when the stop condition is met, but it proceeds always all through the list of users. Therefore, independent claim 1, and claims 2, and 4-21 depending from claim 1 are patentable.

Regarding claims 22-24, the Office Action does not present any support to rejecting the claims separate from the arguments using claim 1 language in pages 2-5 of the outstanding Office Action. Applicants respectfully note that while claim 1 is directed to a information-distribution method, claims 22-24 are directed to an information-distribution device, a computer-readable medium on which is recorded an information-distribution program, and a computer product, respectively. Claims 22-24 recite features that have not been recited in claim 1. In the Amendment filed on October 25, 2006, Applicants indicated specifically features of the claims 22-24 that are considered to be distinguishing over the cited prior art references. Applicants respectfully request a response accordingly.

Independent claim 22 patentably distinguishes over Lynch and Evgey, because the cited prior art fails to teach or suggest at least:

- a distribution-condition-accepting means for accepting from the distributor-user terminal a distribution condition according to which the distribution content accepted by said information-accepting means is distributed;
- a distributee-candidate-determining means for determining one or more distributee-candidate terminals to which the distribution content will be distributed, the distributee-candidate terminals being at least one selected, in accordance with the distribution condition, from second user terminals among the designee-user terminals stored, by said storing means, correlatively with the designator-user identifier identifying the distributor-user terminal
- a second distribution means for transmitting the distribution content, from any user terminal to which the distribution content has been sent, to some or all of one or more third user terminals that are registered in the buddy list of the distributee-candidate terminals, wherein said distribution-condition-accepting means receive a stop condition for stopping said distribution-catenating means.

Independent claim 23 patentably distinguishes over Lynch and Evgey, because the cited prior art fails to teach or suggest at least:

- a distribution-condition-accepting step of accepting from the distributor-user terminal a distribution condition according to which the distribution content accepted in said information-accepting step is distributed;
- a distributee-candidate-determining step of determining one or more distributee-candidate terminals to which the distribution content will be distributed, the distributee-candidate terminals being at least one selected, in accordance with the distribution condition, from second user terminals among the designee-user terminals stored, in said storing step, correlatively with the designator-user identifier identifying the distributor-user terminal
- a second distribution step of transmitting the distribution content, from any user terminal to which the distribution content has been sent, to some or all of one or more third user terminals that are registered in the buddy list of the distributee-candidate terminals, wherein said distribution-condition-accepting step includes receiving a stop condition for stopping said distribution-catenating step.

Independent claim 24 patentably distinguishes over Lynch and Evgey, because the cited prior art fails to teach or suggest at least:

- a distribution-condition-accepting means for accepting from the distributor-user terminal a distribution condition according to which the distribution content accepted by said information-accepting means is distributed;
- a distributee-candidate-determining means for determining one or more distributee-candidate terminals to which the distribution content will be distributed, the distributee-candidate terminals being at least one selected, in accordance with the distribution condition, from second user terminals among the designee-user terminals stored, by said storing means, correlatively with the designator-user identifier identifying the distributor-user terminal;
- a second distribution means for transmitting the distribution content, from any user terminal to which the distribution content has been sent, to some or all of one or more third user terminals that are registered in the buddy list of the distributee-candidate terminals, wherein said distribution-condition-accepting means receive a stop condition for stopping said distribution-catenating means.

NEW CLAIMS

New claims 29 and 30 are directed to information-distribution methods for a system including a computer and user terminals connected via a network. The new claims are fully supported by the originally filed specification and claims.

Claim 29 patentably distinguishes over the prior art at least by reciting

- providing a stop distribution condition to the computer by a first user terminal among the user terminals, and
- distributing the distribution content one after another to user terminals on the buddy lists of terminals that have received the distribution content until the stop distribution condition is met.

Claim 30 patentably distinguishes over the prior art at least by reciting

- distributing a distribution content provided by a first user terminal to the computer, to one or more second user terminals identified on a buddy list corresponding to the first user terminal; and
- distributing the distribution content from user terminals that received the distribution

content to corresponding one or more user terminals on buddy lists of the respective user terminals until a stop distribution condition provided by the first terminal is met.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.


Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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